



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2025

**Dear Friends,**

The Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge is unique. When it was formed over 60 years ago, this area was almost entirely rural. The footprint of the Refuge has expanded over time, but the surrounding population has grown exponentially. The population of the Portland-Metro area tripled, Clark County's has increased sixfold, and Ridgefield's has expanded by nearly twenty times. Now, the Refuge is considered an Urban Refuge, facing incredible opportunities and distinct challenges.

With development closing in, the wildness of this land is increasingly precious and its protection more urgent. This refuge remains essential: a sanctuary where wildlife can survive, and where humans can find awe, quiet, and restoration.

At the heart of our work is fostering respect for the privilege of accessing this precious landscape; it is not a park, but a place wildlife depend on.

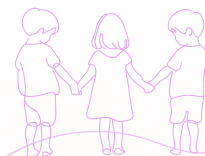
The Friends' partnership with the US Fish & Wildlife Service at the Refuge is enduring, and we have entered a critical new chapter. Our core mission to protect this landscape remains unchanged, but our environment has evolved. Thanks to your membership, we are working together to fully realize the promise of the new Community Nature Center. This space will bridge the gap between our growing community and the wild, providing inclusive access to nature for people of all ages while protecting the plants and animals that call the Refuge home.

To meet the challenges of the next 60 years, the Friends must grow our capacity, starting now. We need you—volunteering, joining a committee, or serving on our board! We also need your continued financial support. It has never been more critical than now, as we head into 2026 and work hard to fundraise and rise to the occasion to support this jewel of the Refuge System.

Thank you for standing with us and keeping Ridgefield wild.

**Jim Maul, Board President**

**Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge**



## COMMEMORATIVE BRICKS

In 2025, the Friends threw an exciting Brick Fundraiser bash to support the Nature Exploration Area, and it was a smashing success with **153 bricks sold!** We're eagerly counting down the days until summer 2026, when construction kicks off and we can finally unveil these personalized bricks. They'll be laid out at the entrance of the Nature Exploration Area, creating a welcoming path from the parking lot.



Concepts of future Nature Explore layout.  
Clockwise: Facing from the parking lot, looking west. A rotated concept of the entrance, looking east. The Nature Exploration full concept, rotated to be viewed looking south.

BIRDFEST & BLUEGRASS 2025

In 2025, BirdFest & Bluegrass had another amazing year! The Friends teamed up with the **Ridgefield Art Association** to host our very first Art Contest! We saw amazing art from everyone in our community.

Contest categories included Adults, Fledgling (High School), Nestling (5-8 grade), and Hatchling (K-4 grade). Each category had one winner chosen for the Mayor’s, People’s Choice, and Teacher’s Choice awards. There were a ton of really incredible interpretations of nature and our refuge.

We also worked alongside **Ridgefield Main Street** to introduce a fun game that took the birds of the refuge into the businesses of downtown! Participating families, kids, and adults who found all the birds from each business were awarded Main Street Moola for their efforts.



Anna & Andrew Moskal with their winning art pieces  
BirdFest & Bluegrass 2025



One of the walls of art featured during the art contest



Left to right:  
A photo walk on the Kiwa Trail, child makes special binoculars for her craft, & the 2025 Osprey button design

In December, **Ridgefield Main Street** presented the Friends and BirdFest & Bluegrass with the Ridgefield Star Award for Supporter of the Year for 2025! We are truly grateful and honored by this recognition.

Our flagship event, made possible with the support of the **City of Ridgefield**, is anticipated to be even greater in 2026! Alongside a planned **2nd Annual Art Contest**, the Friends will collaborate with the **American Society of Media Photographers (ASMP)** to enhance our Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Photo Contest in partnership with **Pro Photo Supply**, making it bigger than ever.



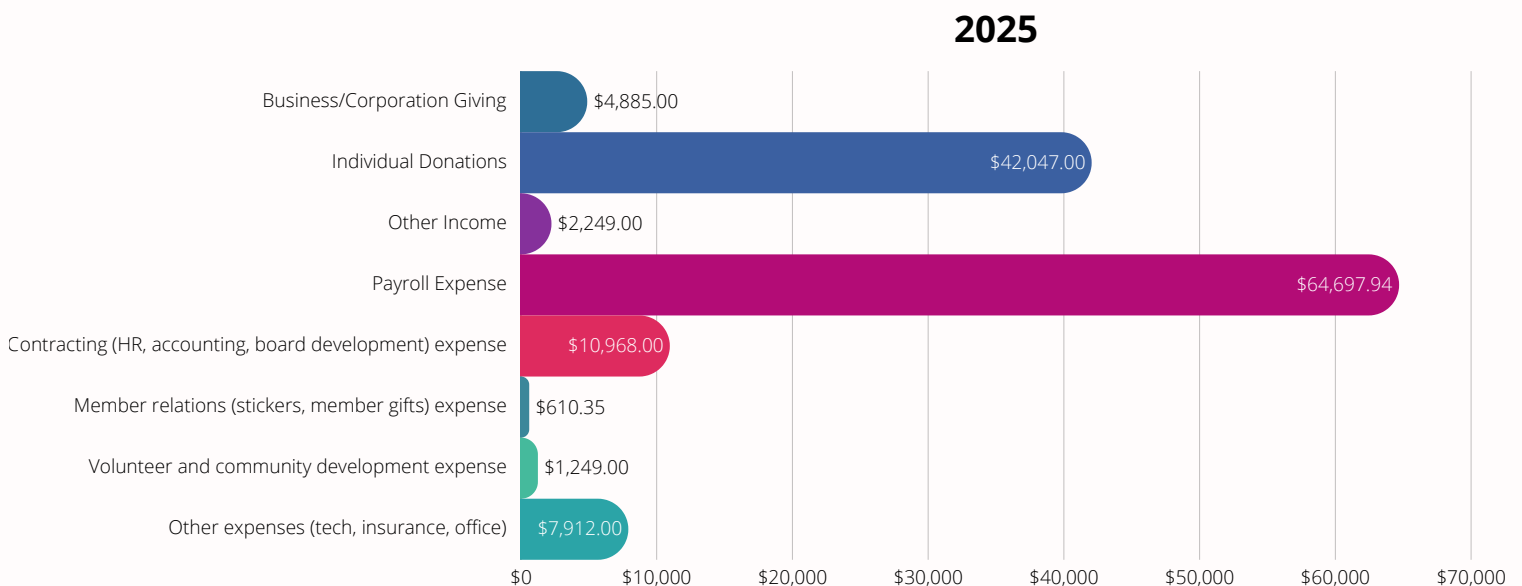
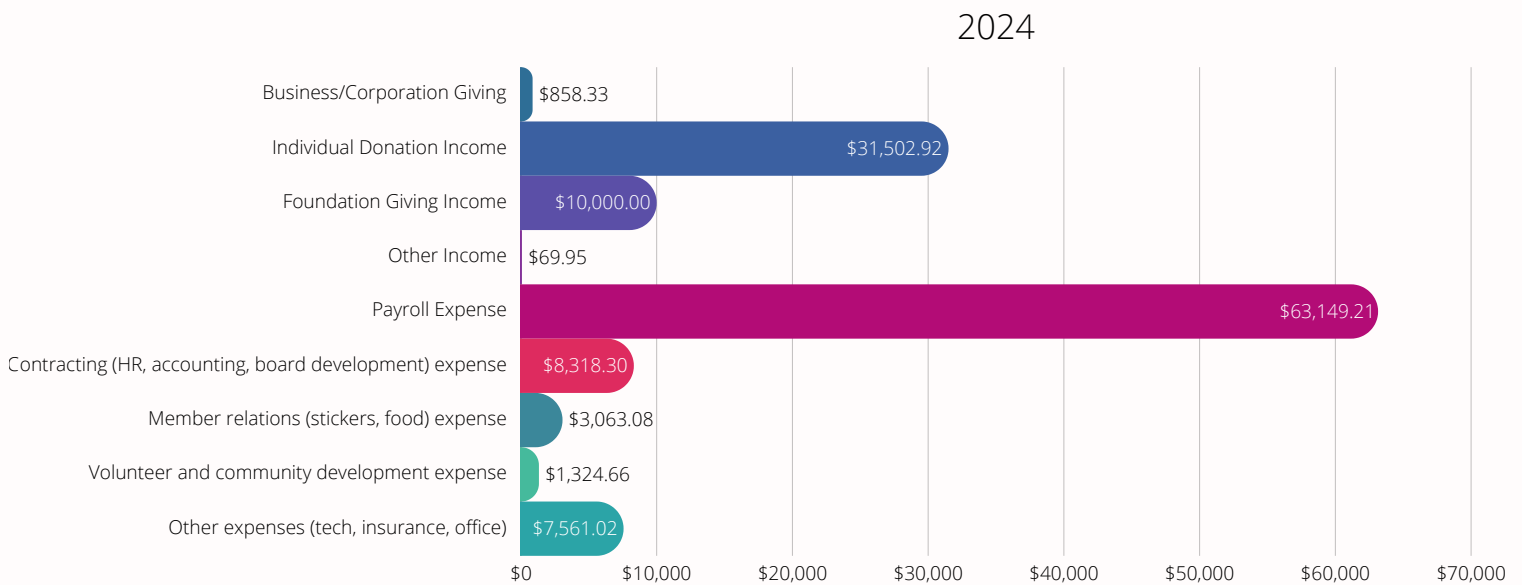
Ridgefield Main Street  
2025 Main Street Star  
BirdFest & Bluegrass  
Supporter of the Year  
BirdFest & Bluegrass 2025

We want to extend our deepest gratitude to the remarkable volunteers at BirdFest & Bluegrass 2025. Despite the Government Shutdown and the lack of a dedicated volunteer coordinator, many of you stepped up to guide and assist visitors to the best of your ability, and your efforts are truly valued.

This event isn't just a hoot and a half—it's a crucial way to spread the word about the Refuge. Cheers to making it happen!

## 2025 FINANCIALS GENERAL OPERATIONS 2024 VS 2025

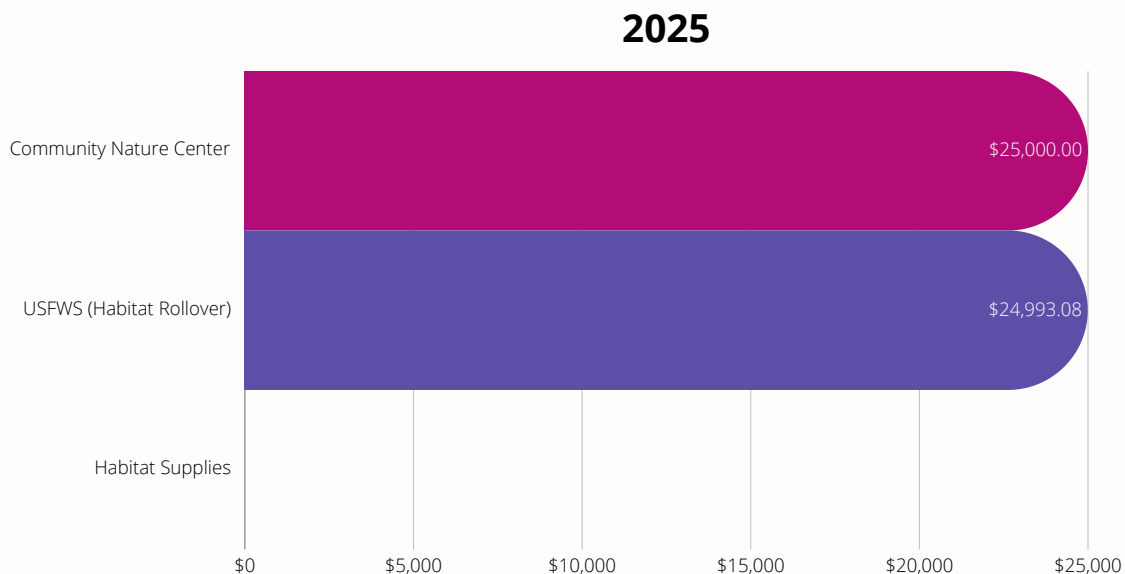
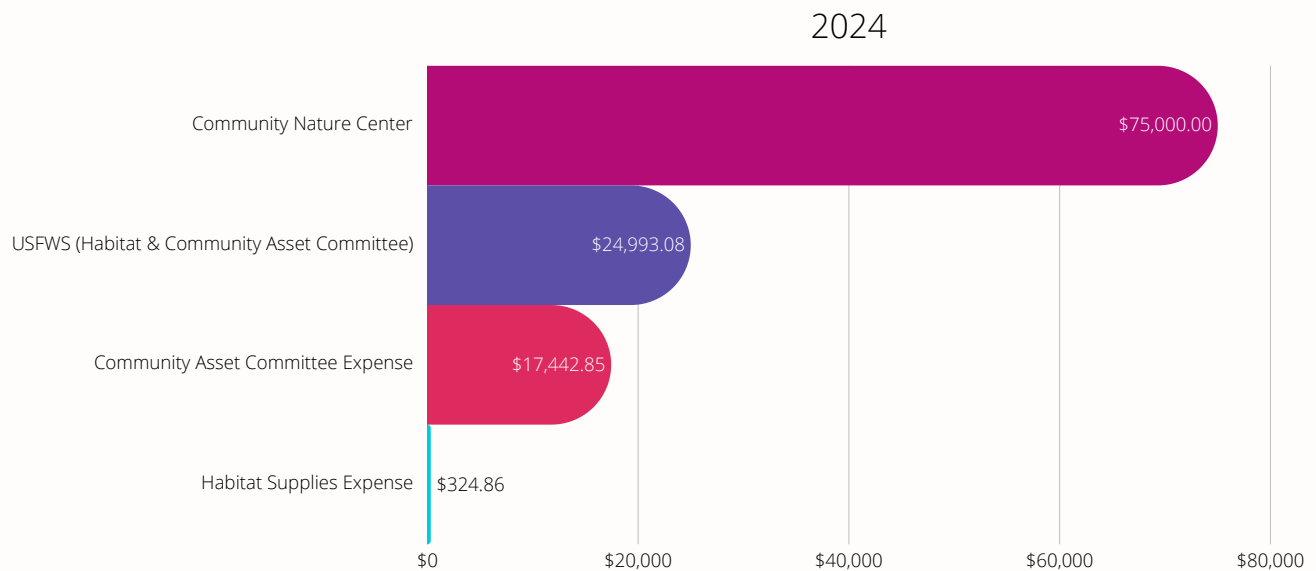
Membership dues, grants, and generous donations have empowered Friends to offer remarkable opportunities throughout the community. The charts displayed on this page illustrate the income designated solely for the listed expenses, excluding grants or other restricted categories.



## 2025 FINANCIALS RESTRICTED FUND INCOME 2024 VS 2025

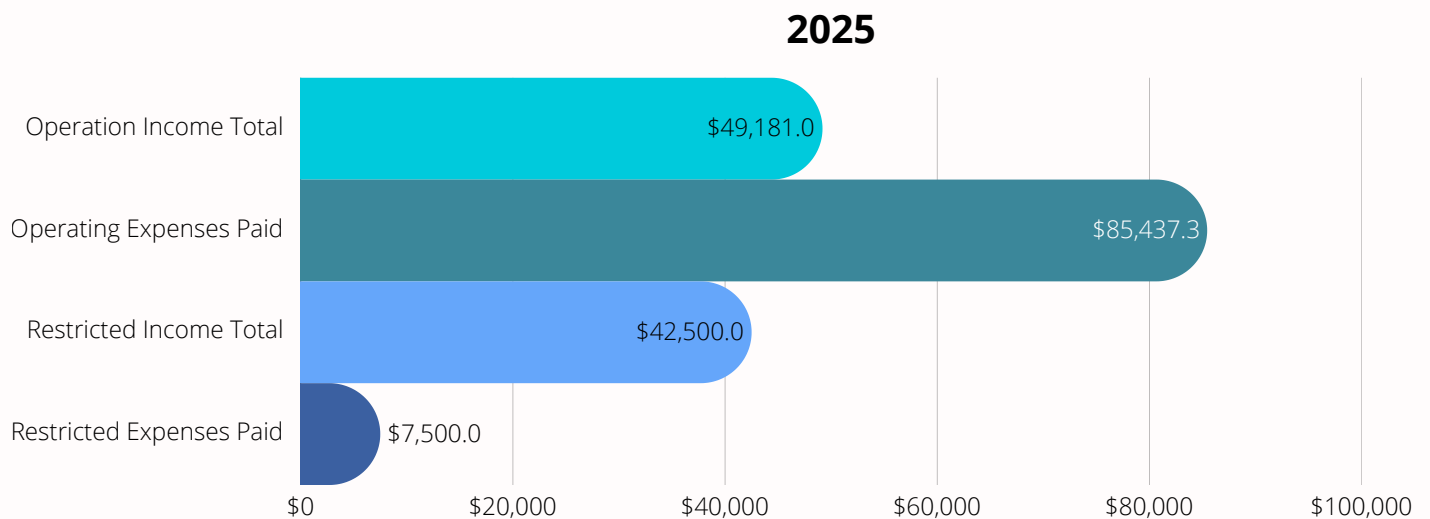
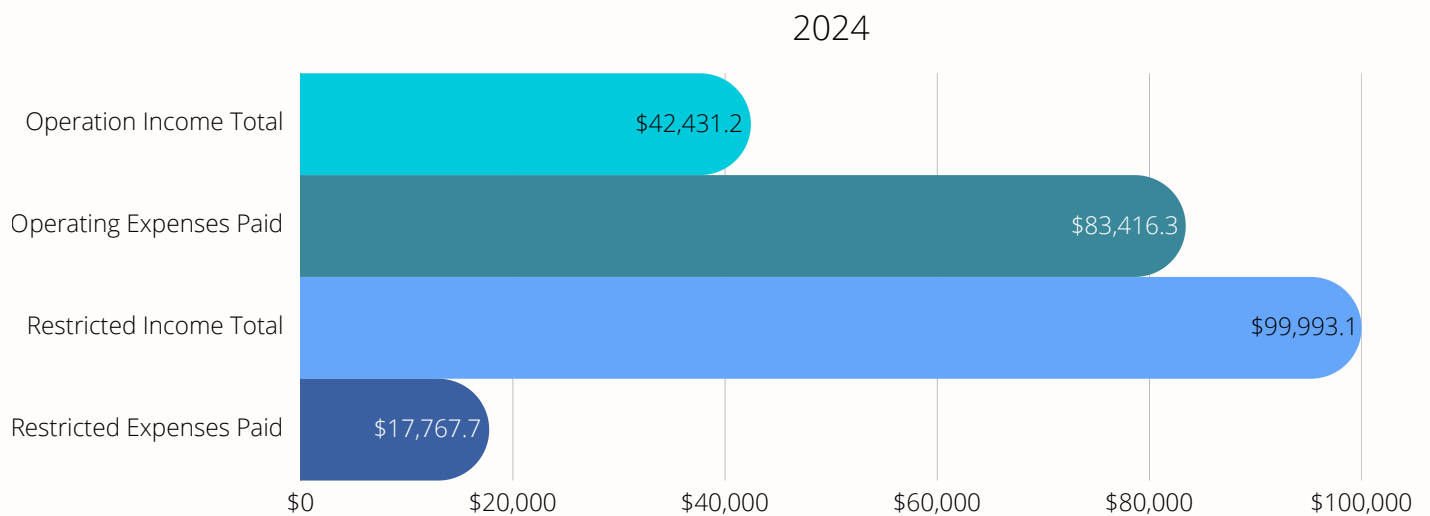
The Friends secured \$100,000 for the Nature Exploration Area of the Community Nature Center, thanks to the Keller Foundation. \$75k was deposited for use in 2025, and once our match was met, the remaining \$25k was added for 2026.

Much of 2025 was spent fundraising for the Nature Exploration Area match funds needed for the Keller Grant, running a Brick Fundraiser, developing plans, and securing contracts to complete this project.



## 2025 FINANCIALS SUMMARY 2024 VS 2025

We have compiled a summary of both restricted and unrestricted income to highlight the differences between funds that cannot be used for daily operations and those that are available. This includes an overview of the income received, as well as the amounts paid for specific projects or purposes.



2026 EVENTS

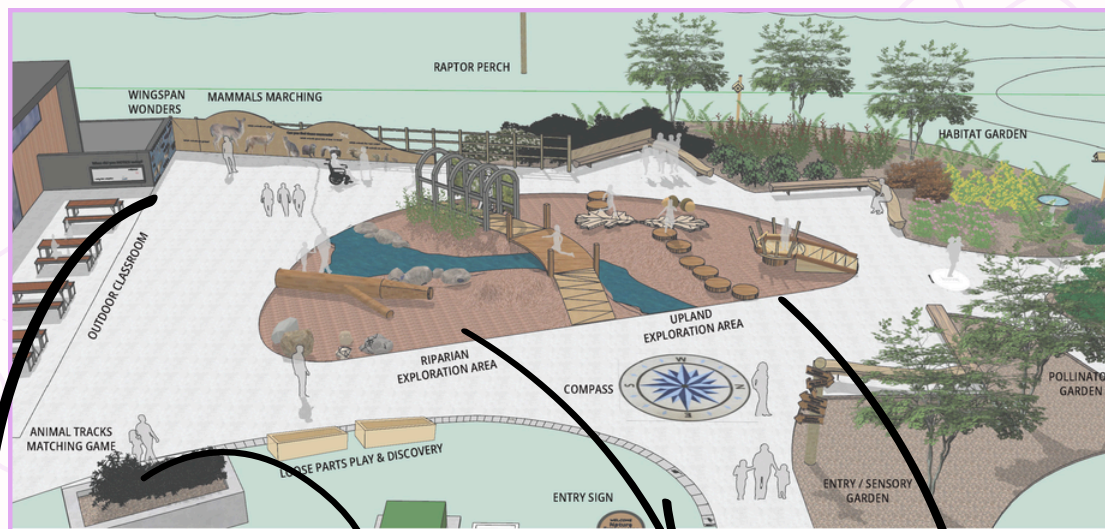
- Friends Member Wellness Event - Ridgefield Dragon Boats, summer 2026!
- GiveMore24! - September 24, 2026
- BirdFest & Bluegrass - October 3, 2026

NATURE EXPLORATION AREA

Thanks to our 2025 **Keller Foundation** grant and creative input from **Nature+Play Designs**, we're thrilled to create the Nature Exploration Area! This outdoor space invites adventurers of all ages and abilities to enjoy the Refuge.

However, keep that excitement brewing, as we're still raising funds for key features:

- A plant trellis tunnel for wheelchair adventurers
- Interactive gardens for sustainable harvesting, observing pollinators, getting hands dirty, and learning about native plants.
- Life-sized Eagle Nest... and more!



Concepts of future Nature Explore layout.  
 Clockwise: Facing from the parking lot, looking west. Fallen log, trellis pathway, life-size eagle nest, large-scale oaks.  
 Wingspan Wonders & Mammals Marching walls. An animal footprint matching game.



SUSAN WICKERSHAM MEMORIAL EDUCATION FUND

The **Susan Wickersham Memorial Education Fund** was established with a generous gift from the Wickersham Family in 2025, in memory of wife, mother, wildlife lover, and educator Susan Wickersham. This fund allows donors to support educational initiatives at the Ridgefield Refuge. Donations collected in 2025 and beyond will be used for various purposes, including:

- Field trip support, including busing and materials
- Development of the Environmental Education Classroom (EE Classroom)

The EE Classroom Committee was formed to focus on determining the best ways to equip the EE Classroom for students of all ages by collaborating with local educators. Together, they research various elements that the Friends can fund through grant applications and sponsorship requests, such as the stools and tables mentioned later in this report!

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

In 2026, The Friends plan to be even busier getting the word out about the Refuge and what an invaluable part of the community it is. We will have a presence at most Ridgefield First Saturdays, including guided walks during Big Paddle. We'll also be attending Chamber of Commerce events.

Jean Stemp, our new Vice President, has also started writing a monthly article for the Ridgefield Living Magazine! Keep an eye out for extra Refuge fun facts.

FRIENDS & REFUGE EDUCATION SERIES

The Friends are partnering with the **US Fish & Wildlife Service** at Ridgefield Refuge in 2026 to put on a series of educational events, with the last one taking place in the newly opened Community Nature Center.

More events are being planned for 2026, make sure you are subscribed to our e-newsletter to stay up-to-date!



We are incredibly grateful for the support of our members, both new and renewing, as well as our donors this year, especially during our big **GivingMore24!** push. We hope to keep that momentum up in 2026!

Online store shoppers were a huge help, and we want to thank those who purchased items from our **Amazon Wishlist**.

We also can't forget to thank the **Ridgefield Raptors** for hosting a special ticket fundraiser for us, and anyone who bought a ticket to the game!

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Thank you to all of our 2025 generous financial supporters! Your donations support the programs that have a measurable and meaningful impact on the Refuge.

- **189** individual donors
- **102** GiveMore24! donors
- **47** GiveBig donors
- **11** GivingTuesday donors
- **Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife**
- The **Keller Foundation** for its grant to support the **Nature Exploration Area**.
- **Tidewater Barge Lines** for supporting our volunteers
- Our **2025 Birdfest & Bluegrass** sponsors: the **City of Ridgefield, Pro Photo Supply, Old Liberty Theater & Seasons Coffee, Ridgefield Art Association, Ridgefield Main Street, Ridgefield Lions Club, and Ridgefield First Saturdays!**
- A big shoutout to the **US Fish & Wildlife Service!** Their collaboration is the secret ingredient behind our efforts for wildlife, our communities, and more.

## COMMUNITY NATURE CENTER CLASSROOM

Thanks to your generous support, the Friends were able to kick off 2026 in style, fully equipping the classroom at the new Community Nature Center with adjustable tables and stools in two different sizes. These additions ensure the classroom is accessible and functional for students of all ages and abilities.

A special **THANK YOU** goes out to our **Amazon Wishlist** supporters, who played a crucial role in gathering the final touches needed to transform the space into a fully operational classroom by its opening on May 3, 2026. Your donations and supply contributions—including everything from posters, bulletin boards, and sign holders to snacks for our volunteers—truly brought this vision to life.



Environmental Education Classroom in the Community Nature Center, featuring new tables, chairs, informational posters, and displays.



Environmental Education Classroom Bulletin Board



Environmental Education Classroom rolling whiteboard and feedback display



Environmental Education Classroom doors, viewed from the Multi-purpose Room

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# FRIENDS OF RIDGEFIELD NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

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